

PAs are very important for veterans living in rural areas, like those living in my congressional district. Veterans that live in underserved areas made the same sacrifices as their urban and suburban counterparts. With a disproportionate number of these brave men and women being cared for by PAs, it is critical that we establish a system that will best serve the needs of those veterans so as not to compromise their care.

Considering the fact that nearly 40 percent of all VA PAs are projected to retire in the next five years, the VA is in danger of losing its PA workforce unless some attention is paid to this critical group.

My bill will allow the Director of PA Services to become an integral component within the VA system, to proactively solve the many issues facing PAs, and give PAs a fair and long overdue voice within the VA.

Madam Speaker, this commonsense legislation promotes quality medical care for our veterans and I am proud to introduce it again this Congress. This bill (H.R. 2790) passed the House in the 110th Congress, but stalled in the Senate. I look forward to working with my Congressional colleagues to once again bring this measure to the floor so our nation's heroes have access to the care they need and deserve.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING THE
200TH ANNIVERSARY OF
TUSCARAWAS COUNTY

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Tuscarawas County is celebrating the 200th anniversary of its organization; and

Whereas, Tuscarawas County has contributed greatly to the history and culture of eastern Ohio and its residents should take pride in the accomplishments of the county and look forward to its future; and

Whereas, the residents of Tuscarawas County will celebrate the county's 200th anniversary with a Bicentennial Parade, fireworks show, music by local school and adult performers, and exhibits commemorating the history and culture of Tuscarawas County; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that along with the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I commend the residents of Tuscarawas County, past and present, for their contribution to the state of Ohio over the last 200 years, congratulate them on the bicentennial of the county, and wish them well in the festivities planned to commemorate this once in a lifetime event.

INTRODUCTION OF DOMESTIC
TUNA CANNING BILL

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to clarify existing tariff law and protect our domestic tuna canning industry. Bumble Bee Foods operates the only

tuna cannery remaining in the United States in Santa Fe Springs, CA in my 38th Congressional District. This cannery relies on imported tuna loins from Asia to manufacture canned tuna in the U.S.

For 75 years, Congress and the administration have implemented a \$10 per loin ton (less than 1%) duty rate on tuna loins while having a 12.5% duty rate on canned tuna. The difference in these duty rates is to encourage companies like Bumble Bee to can tuna in the United States. Given our current economic situation, it is of maximum importance to help maintain and create jobs in the United States.

Bumble Bee imported tuna loins in plastic bags sealed with metal clips and paid the lesser duty rate. At the direction of the Food and Drug Administration in 2000, Bumble Bee stopped this practice and instead began packaging loins with a heat seal to improve product quality and safety.

Upon inspection of the heat sealed bags in August 2006, the local Customs Service at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach concluded that the new bags were airtight and imposed increased duties of 12.5%. This is contradictory to Congress' intent and the historical application of customs regulations that put a lower tariff rate on imported tuna loins to promote the domestic tuna canning industry. The fact that current imports of loins are in heat sealed plastic bags to more effectively prevent contamination of frozen tuna loins should not change the underlying classification of the product.

The bill I am introducing today will clarify the previously long standing customs regulations and allow tuna companies to continue to safely import tuna loins at a lower duty rate to can in the U.S. The bill requires Customs to adopt a clear test to determine whether a container is "airtight" that is based on universal standards, promotes health and safety, and comports with the intent of the tariff legislation. Under such a test, heat sealed loin bags would not be subject to the higher duty rate paid by canned tuna imports.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill which will clarify Congress' intent to protect the domestic canning industry by maintaining a lower duty rate on imported tuna loins.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. JEFF FORTENBERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, pursuant to the Republican Leadership standards on member requests, I am submitting the following information regarding an earmark I received as part of H.R. 1105, the FY09 Omnibus Appropriations Bill:

Requesting Member: Congressman JEFF FORTENBERRY

Bill Number: H.R. 1105, FY09 Omnibus Appropriations Bill

Account: Corps of Engineers—Construction Project Name: Antelope Creek Flood Damage Reduction Project

Amount: \$4,620,000

Name and Address of Requesting Entity: Lower Platte South Natural Resources District located at 3125 Portia Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68521.

Description: The Antelope Creek Flood Damage Reduction Project is a critical element of a flood control, transportation and community revitalization project known as the Antelope Valley Project. The project is being constructed in central Lincoln adjacent to the University of Nebraska Lincoln main campus to improve flood control, transportation networks and community well-being in the city's downtown area.

A CALL FOR CONGRESSIONAL RE-
SPONSIBILITY AND TRANS-
PARENCY

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to a cost-of-living increase for Members of Congress. Across our country, the faltering economy is closing businesses and leaving many without jobs. Our national debt is climbing to levels that future generations will be responsible for. I believe it is past time for Congress to be responsible. One action we can take is to cancel the automatic pay increase.

Without a direct yes-or-no vote on this provision, we add to the impression that too many people have of Congress. If Congress is to vote itself a raise in pay, it should be done in full view.

This process should be reformed. Members of Congress should not be able to receive an automatic cost-of-living increase. Each of us should be on the record with the citizens of our districts whether we believe an increase to our own salary is justified. In this time of increased economic hardship, I am going on the record in firm opposition to this increase in pay. Since I was not allowed to directly vote yes or no, this forum has become my only recourse. We will not have the transparent process promised to my fellow Americans until we cease this automatic system. I only wish I could do more to right this injustice to the American taxpayer. We have a long way to go in gaining the people's trust. Ending this unfair practice would help.

2009 ACADEMY NOMINEES

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Madam Speaker, every year more high school seniors from the 11th Congressional District trade in varsity jackets for Navy pea coats, Air Force flight suits, and Army brass buckles than most other districts in the country. But this is nothing new. Our area has repeatedly sent an above average contingent of its sons and daughters to the nation's military academies for decades.

This should not come as a surprise. The educational excellence of our area's schools is well known and has long been a magnet for families looking for the best environment in which to raise their children. Our graduates are skilled not only in mathematics, science, and social studies, but also have solid backgrounds in sports, debate teams, and other